

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

MEMBER * * * * *
#0000 2910 0005#
605 DTM
SOUTHERN BAPT HISTORICAL SOC
901 COMMERCE ST STE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203-3620

SINCE 1877

CH 13, 2003

VOL. 127

No. 6

Terrorist blast claims missionary's life

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — A Southern Baptist missionary on the field for nearly 25 years was killed, and another missionary and her two children injured, when a terrorist bomb exploded March 4 at the busy local airport in Davao City, Philippines.

William P. "Bill" Hyde, age 59, died in surgery from severe head and leg injuries. Barbara Wallis Stevens, age 33, was slightly injured. However, Stevens' 10-month-old son Nathan was critically wounded and her daughter Sarah, age four, was treated and released with minor injuries. Stevens' husband Mark was not injured in the blast.

outside the arrival terminal of the Davao airport in the Philippines' second-largest city. The blast ripped through a bus shelter outside the terminal in which scores of people were huddled to escape a downpour.

Hyde was from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Immanuel Church there has been the home for the Hydés, and they also maintained ties with nearby Northbrook Church, a sister church of Immanuel.

A former music teacher, Hyde served in church and leadership development. He and his wife Lyn Gage Hyde were appointed by IMB in October 1978. The Hydés have two grown sons, Timothy and Steven.

Bill Hyde had met the Stevens family at the airport as they returned from a family trip. Mark and Barbara Stevens were appointed as missionaries in September 2000. Mark Stevens is a church planter, while Barbara Stevens has served as a church and home outreach worker.

Barbara Stevens was injured by shrapnel in her left side and foot and was released from the hospital. Tim Warren, pastor of the church where she grew up, First Church in Willard, Mo., said a prayer chain was activated around 5:30 a.m. March 4 with a special focus on Stevens' son, who has a bleeding disorder.

"The bleeding just miraculously stopped," Warren told The Pathway newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention. According to reports relayed from Barbara Stevens' mother, Warren said, "They didn't have to do surgery. I think there was so much prayer going up, and God just honored it," Warren said.

Ed Gregory, missions team leader for the Baptist Convention of Iowa, described Hyde as "the epitome of the missionary spirit." Amid periodic family needs and concerns, with some people urging them to stay stateside by saying, "it's safer, it's better," Gregory said Hyde and his wife "just kept on going back to the field where God had call them."

Gregory and Hyde first met during the early 1980s during Gregory's 17 years as Immanuel's pastor.

Over the years, Hyde "kept retraining ...fulfilling different roles ...teaching, church planting. He was constantly developing Filipino pastors, helping them get new work started and then

mentoring them in their roles."

His wife, meanwhile, likewise has been devoted to missions. "She was constantly preparing for and leading devotional life conferences for the women there," Gregory said.

Warren, in Willard, Mo., said the Stevenses are "very close to our heart." The couple has spoken several times at the church, he said, and a Vacation Bible School offering was used to buy them cell phones so they can talk when he is ministering to indigenous people in remote regions.

Mission leaders have been touched by expressions of sympathy that

have come from all across the country, said Mississippian Jerry Rankin, IMB President Jerry Rankin.

"We are deeply moved by the massive outpouring of support from Southern Baptists for our International Mission Board family as we grieve the death of Bill Hyde," Rankin said. "Bill and his wife Lyn were personal friends whose vibrant faith was an inspiration and blessing to all who knew them."



Hyde



Mark (left) and Barbara Stevens

"We also grieve with the many Filipino families who have been touched by this tragedy. We are praying that God will minister comfort to Lyn and their family, to Mark and Barbara Stevens and their children, and to all the friends and coworkers who have suffered this loss."

The IMB (www.imb.org) is an entity of the 16-million-member Southern Baptist Convention that appoints Southern Baptist international missionaries and supports the 5,441 missions personnel now working among 1,497 people groups worldwide. In 2002, Southern Baptist international missionaries and their coworkers baptized 421,436 new believers and organized 8,369 churches.

IMB will post information from the Philippines as it develops at www.imb.org/urgent.

The Philippines

Davao

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Directions

Letters to the editor

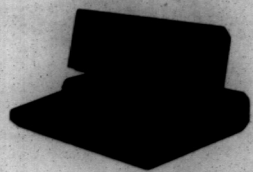
Sunday School lessons

Nathan Stevens suffered a shrapnel wound to his liver and was in delicate condition for 48 hours, said Wendy Norvelle, a spokesman for the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va. Doctors decided he could be safely removed from the intensive care unit on March 5 and upgraded his condition to stable, she said.

"Our hearts go out to these families and their coworkers," said Mississippian Larry Cox, IMB vice-president for mobilization. "We are moving quickly to assist the missionaries affected by this tragedy. We ask Christians everywhere to pray that God would show himself strong for these families, their coworkers, and the other members of the Southern Baptist missionary family."

At least 21 people were killed and 144 injured in the attack, which occurred

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.
Perkins Jr.**
Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tony Martin

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE
Anne Ranson

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Lennie N. Young

ADVERTISING
Dana Richardson

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Brenda Quattlebaum

BOOKKEEPER
Betty Anne Bailey

EDITOR EMERITUS
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Al Green Jr., Bay St. Louis
Rick Henson, Brandon
Ken Hester, Pontotoc
Beverly Pyron, Natchez
Billy Watkins, Madison
Michael Weeks, Olive Branch
Dana Richardson, secretary

Postmaster: Send changes of address
to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box
530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send
news, communication, and address
changes to The Editor, BAPTIST
RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS
39205-0530 (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

VOLUME 127 NUMBER 6
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$9.35
per year payable in advance. Economy
plans available for cooperating Mississippi
churches. Periodicals postage paid at
Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State
Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items —
one calendar week prior to requested pub-
lication date. Advertising — two calendar
weeks prior to requested publication date.

Alcohol's awful price, paid in full

The staccato ringing of the doorbell roused me from my deep sleep. The bedside clock read 12:05 a.m., and the ringing seemed to be getting ever more desperate as I moved cautiously toward the front door of our house.

When I turned on the outside light and peered through the blinds, I immediately spotted Michael (not his real name), a good-natured neighborhood kid and my 10-year-old daughter's school classmate.

Michael was standing barefoot and shivering in the 25-degree weather, wearing only his underwear and a T-shirt. My wife and I hurried him into our house and put warm clothes on him. I will not soon forget the story he told us through still-chattering teeth, or the events that followed.

Michael lives with his single mother, who has a drinking problem. On this night, his mother had left him at home while she went out to enjoy an alcohol-soaked evening on the town with some of her hard-drinking friends. When she returned at midnight in an advanced state of drunkenness, Michael tried to tell her how frightened and worried he had been in the hours she had been gone.

For some reason known only to other drunks, she flew into a rage over Michael's words of concern and began to chase him threateningly through their house. Cursing and wildly swinging a belt at him, she was too addled to catch up to the fleet-footed child for long.

Michael somehow managed to escape from the house and paced his front yard, trying to decide what to do. He was getting colder and colder, but he was also terrified to go back in the house. That's when he turned up on our doorstep.

My wife calmed him as I dialed the telephone number for the police department. He pleaded with us to allow him to call his grandmother — his mother's mother. Inexperienced and untrained in the dynamics of alcoholic families, my wife and I agreed that he could call his grandmother. We now know that any addiction counselor could have predicted what happened next: the grandmother immediately

called Michael's mother and betrayed his whereabouts. It was only a matter of minutes before Michael's mother pulled into our driveway and staggered to our front door.

Michael's mother cursed him for the embarrassment he had caused her, and promised him a beating when they got back to their house. It was at that moment that the police officer arrived.

An ugly confrontation ensued between the officer and Michael's mother. The officer called for backup, and before it ended Michael's mother was in the cage in the back seat of the officer's patrol car. I shall never be able to forget the look in Michael's eyes as the patrol car pulled away, Michael in the front seat with the officer and his out-of-control mother caged like an animal in the rear seat.

It was impossible to return to sleep, so I spent the hours before dawn praying for Michael and his mother. I prayed for the Holy Spirit's intervention in his mother's life, and for the intervention of caring, Christian people who can help her through this difficult period of single parenthood.

I prayed that Michael would not fall prey to the generational cycle of addiction and violence that so often haunts alcoholic families. I prayed for Michael's salvation, and that the Lord would find a way to reach him through the confusion and insecurity of his life situation. I prayed that He would use me, as He wills, to accomplish that purpose.

I prayed for empowerment to keep my home free of the influence of the Evil One, so that children like Michael will continue to think of it as a refuge. I prayed for Godliness and purity in my own life.

Most of all I prayed for the scourge of alcohol to be removed from our land, because there has never been a drop of alcohol consumed for which someone like Michael has not paid the awful price in full.

March 15, 2003



For more information contact the
Bible & Religious Liberty Commission
of the Southern Baptist Convention,
1-800-495-9122 or visit www.bible.org

For Michael and millions of children just like him, alcohol brings nothing but misery and destruction — of which we wholeheartedly approve, from which we avert our eyes for the few pieces of silver euphemistically known as tax revenue.

Let none of us be fooled. God is not impressed with alcohol's "benefits." He doesn't care about the tax advantages. What He does care about is every hair on Michael's head and for the millions of other children in Michael's situation.

One day, He will ask each of us why we stood silently while so many of His children were destroyed by legalized alcohol.

If that reality doesn't drive you to your knees before Almighty God, what will?

GUEST OPINION:

Marijuana in the parking lot

By Tim Rutledge, member
First Church, Madison

When I was in the second grade, my teacher wrote to my parents: "Timmy needs to learn there is more to life than guns and detectives." At age 41, I continue my call to serve others as a 20-year Agent of the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics (1 Peter 4:10).

Part of my service means getting almost weekly calls from Christian parents whose children have fallen to the temptation of using drugs. They don't understand why their child failed. They had discussed drug use with them, they took their children to church regularly, and now they were hit so hard and so unexpectedly.

Substance Abuse Sunday will be observed March 15 in the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. Everyone should realize that drug use among teenagers is prevalent. There are drugs at nightclubs, house parties, schools, and yes, even our churches.

One child obtained marijuana for the first time on a church parking lot following

Wednesday night services. I am not saying all teenagers are bad. I am saying we all have a very real, a very clear, and a very present problem. What do we do? Though there is not one answer, there are solutions.

First, your children should know that using drugs is wrong (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 13:1-5; Ephesians 5:18).

Secondly, the parent should know what to look for. There are free classes available to teach parents the signs and symptoms of drug use; anyone interested in those classes can call me at (800) 844-6272 or

(601) 605-0964. There is good information available on the web (www.nida.nih.gov). The family's doctor should have information available.

Thirdly, know your children and their friends. Without exception, everyone I have arrested started their drug use with a "friend." My favorite verse regarding this is 1 Corinthians 15:33: "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character." (also 2 Peter 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:7-8; Proverbs 4:14-15).

Follow up statements of your child's whereabouts with phone calls. Know the parents of your

child's friends well enough to talk freely to them. Be thoughtful of any sudden change in your child's friends, especially from a "good" friend to a "bad" friend. (No, I'm not politically correct. Trust me; there are "bad" people out there.)

Fourth, be a good example. Don't expect your child to be drug-free when they see you have a drink to fix a "bad" day.

Finally, you have to be the parent. This means stricter guidelines than your children want. This means not being their "friend" all of the time. This means punishment for wrong-doing. This means loving them as our Father loves us. He punishes us when we do wrong. He guides us in our daily walk towards him.

I worked long-term undercover in Cleveland where I met Jim Street while he was pastoring First Church, Cleveland. I have a quote of his on my office wall: "The love of a parent can never be returned — only handed down." My prayer is just this for your children.

Chaplains predicting 'golden opportunity'

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Southern Baptist military chaplains in the Middle East are reporting a swell of spiritual interest among troops preparing for war, including capacity crowds at chapel services and numerous professions of faith.

It's a familiar pattern in times of impending crisis, one that is welcomed by chaplains.

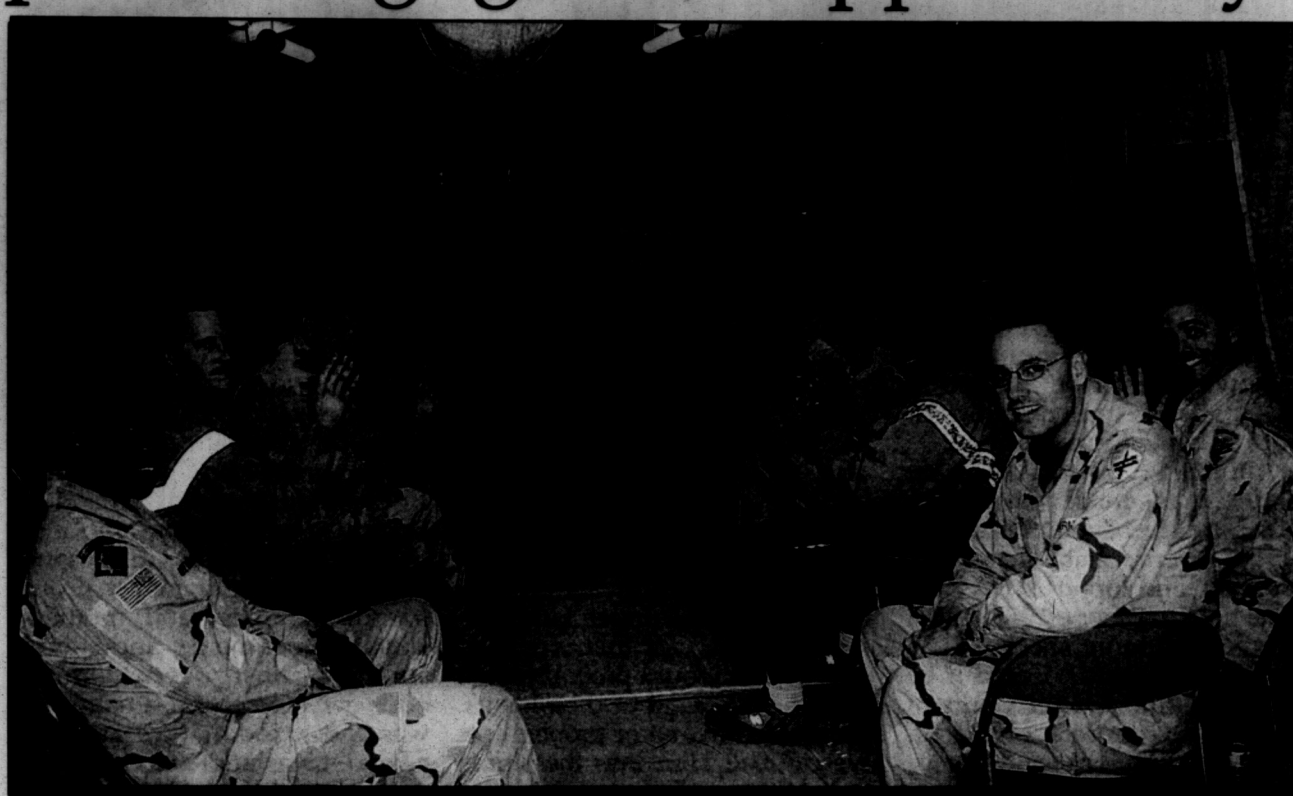
"Now is a golden opportunity to reach soldiers for Christ. I am witnessing all the time and it is the soldiers who want to talk about God and their faith," said Maj. Keith Kilgore, a Southern Baptist U.S. Army chaplain currently based in Kuwait.

"We worship in chapel but the real evangelism takes place everywhere — in the laundry, the mess hall, and the barber-shop, the motor pool and sleep tent," he said. "All I have to do is show up, and someone wants to talk to me about Jesus."

In e-mail reports to friends and prayer partners, Kilgore reported five individuals accepted Christ one Sunday following a sermon on "Why Should God Bless America?"

A recent Washington Post article on the upsurge of spiritual interest gives a firsthand report from one of Kilgore's services in the desert. A khaki tent is regularly packed beyond its capacity of 150, the article said, with some worshipers standing outside and listening through canvas walls.

"It's the best ministry I've ever had," Kilgore told The Post. "When soldiers are about to face combat, they start get-



DESERT BIBLE STUDY — Southern Baptist chaplain Maj. Keith Kilgore (standing) leads an informal Friday night Bible study on a U.S. Army base in Kuwait, as more than 300,000 American and British troops prepare for the likely invasion of Iraq in the next few weeks. (BP photo)

ting spiritual. They want to get right with God."

Southern Baptist chaplain Michael D. Brown, writing from his stateroom aboard the cruiser USS Anzio, said the Holy Spirit is moving "in a dynamic and vibrant life-transforming way."

"Attendance in Bible studies and worship services has increased twofold," he said. "Perhaps this is due in a large part to the insecurity of not knowing what the future holds, but I'd rather believe that these

men and women are coming to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior."

Navy chaplain Darren Stennett, another Southern Baptist, told The Post he had been carrying around for a year a specially designed plastic liner that can be placed in a hole in the sand to make a temporary baptistry. He now has opportunities to use it.

Maj. Timothy Bedsole, a Southern Baptist Army chaplain also based in Kuwait, relayed a description of a typical chapel service as written by his commander, Col. Mike Biering.

"There was a feeling of sensory overload as the service began amongst the outside sounds of heavy engineer equipment, the sound of helicopter rotor blades and truck traffic moving supplies for the soldiers further north — and oh yes, a starting round of praise music complete with two soldiers playing guitar," Biering wrote.

"It was some of the sweetest music I have ever heard. In this strange and far away place, we worshiped our God."

Record

The contrasts are equally striking on board U.S. Navy ships in the region. Southern Baptist Navy chaplain Nick Hamilton described the scene on board the USS Nimitz.

"Many people have asked me what my routine is like onboard an aircraft carrier. That's difficult to say," he wrote. "How can anything be routine in a place that has an airport on the roof and two nuclear power plants in the basement?"

"What I do know is that when I go out onto the flight deck at night, and feel the cold wind and jet blast; hear the afterburners, and look into the faces of sailors who have been working for more than 16 hours... and hear them say something like 'Chaps, it's good to see you up here, thanks for praying for us,' I know that God has brought me to this place for a reason."

Looking back

10 years ago

Southern Baptists react in horror to the shooting of abortion doctor David Gunn, age 47, in Pensacola, Fla., by alleged assailant Michael Griffin, a pro-life demonstrator at a local abortion clinic where Gunn worked. Police say Griffin used a handgun to shoot the doctor three times.

20 years ago

Members of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Executive Committee authorize the expenditure of \$7,000 for the construction of a hay barn at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko. Some 800 bales of hay are currently being stored in rented facilities.

50 years ago

James L. Sullivan, pastor of First Church, Abilene, Texas, is elected executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Sullivan is a native of Silver Creek and a graduate of Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

MARCH 13, 2003

VOL. 127

No. 6

Miss. College inauguration scheduled

The Inaugural Convocation for new Mississippi College (MC) President Lee G. Royce will be held at 2 p.m. on March 21 in the Sanctuary of First Church, Clinton. The Convocation will be followed by an Inaugural Reception at 4 p.m. in Anderson Hall of the B.C. Rogers Student Center on the school's Clinton campus.

As part of the Convocation festivities, an MFA art exhibit will also be open from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on March 21 in the Gore Art Gallery of Aven Hall.

Preceding the Convocation, an Inaugural Worship Service will be held at 6 p.m. on March 16 in the Sanctuary of First Church, Clinton, and an Inaugural Campus Prayer Service will be held at 10:50 a.m. on March 20 in Swor Auditorium of Nelson Hall.

Oregon suicides double

WASHINGTON (BP) — The number of people who legally committed suicide with a physician's assistance in Oregon nearly doubled last year. Thirty-eight people used drugs prescribed by doctors to kill themselves in 2002, contrasted with 21 the year before, according to a March 5 report by the Oregon Department of Human Services. Oregon is the only state that has legalized assisted suicide. The 81% increase in 2002 marked by far the highest number of assisted suicides since Oregon's Death With Dignity Act took effect in 1998. The number of such suicides in previous years was 16 in 1998 and 27 in both 1999 and 2000, according to The Oregonian newspaper. The report also found:

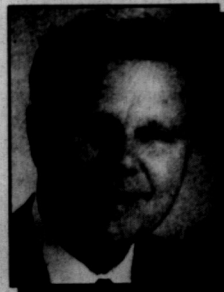
- 84% of the 38 people who committed assisted suicide in 2002 feared "losing autonomy."
- 84% were concerned about a decreasing ability to take part in enjoyable activities.
- 47% were concerned about losing control of bodily functions.
- 37% were concerned about burdening their family, friends or caregivers.
- 26% feared inadequate pain relief.

Pro-lifers continued to argue that pain control, not assisted suicide, for the terminally ill should be the focus of healthcare professionals. Physicians for Compassionate Care (PCE) also expressed concern the state government is cutting back on support for life-sustaining medicine, including for disabled patients, while still funding assisted suicide under Medicaid. Effective March 1, the Oregon Department of Human Services informed "tens of thousands" of Oregonians the state would no longer pay for their medication, according to PCE. The Netherlands has been a leader in assisted dying, but reports of abuses of the practice, including involuntary euthanasia, have been revealed in recent years.

UNDER GOD?

The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California is resurrecting their attack on the Pledge of Allegiance declaring that it is unconstitutional because of the phrase "under God." By stating we are "one nation under God," the Appeals Court says that we are promoting religion, therefore it must be eradicated from our allegiance or any thought related to our country. Heaven forbid that God would in any way be acknowledged or be allowed to be a part of American government or United States culture!

Although my verbal skills are totally inadequate to express fully how I feel about this action, let me simply state that I am appalled and opposed! At the same time, another consideration that is even more shocking has come to my mind. Could it be that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California could actually carry out, in legal terms, what many Americans have already done? Are we one nation under God? How many of our homes are under God? And, what about our schools, our financial institutions, our industries, and businesses? Are they under God? How many of us as



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

individuals day by day, step by step, live, work, and walk as though we are under God?

The greatest tragedy in this whole discussion and effort is the fact that many of us, if not most of us, in America have already done what the Court of Appeals is suggesting be done — remove God. Maybe for many of us the proper preposition should be changed from "under God" to "beside God," for that is where many of us would probably prefer to be. We want God beside us in case we have some problem so we can call Him into the situation. We want Him beside us in case there is some military action and we can plead with Him to respond and overwhelm the enemy and give us victory. We want God beside us in case, economically, things are not on the upswing and we can implore

Him to consider jacking up the stock market to our favor. We would like for Him to be beside us if we get sick, need a favor, or lose our way. But, in reality, the folks who put in the pledge, "one nation under God," had it right. It was under the mighty hand of God that this nation came into existence. It was with divine guidance and influence that our founding fathers and mothers shaped documents and stood strong against overwhelming odds even to become a nation. It was under God that we succeeded and it was under God that we stayed intact during our war of self-destruction. It was under God that we prevailed in world conflicts. It was under God that we survived constitutional crises.

The real issue that is facing our nation in the days ahead is not whether or not the Ninth

Circuit Court of Appeals will have their interpretation accepted, but whether or not we as a nation will surrender ourselves to the Lord and truly be people "under God." You see that phrase says, implies, indicates, and declares that we are people who have surrendered to God and that we recognize that He is the Lord, the Sovereign, the Ruler, and we are His people. It bothers me that a court would want to take action to say that it is unconstitutional. It bothers me even more that we as a people might live in such a way that we declare ourselves unwilling to be "under God." "May we be a people who willingly abide under the shadow of the Almighty and truly be "one nation under God."

How then can we get there — "under God"? Listen to the instructions of God — "If my people who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14).

Yes Lord, that's where we want to be!

Hyde mourned among Iowa Baptist peers

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (BP) — Bill Hyde, killed March 4 by a terrorist bomb blast at a crowded Philippines airport, and his wife Lyn were "well-loved missionaries all across Iowa."

O. Wyndell Jones, retired executive director of the Baptist Convention of Iowa, described the Hydes as key missions advocates as Iowa Baptists grew from fellowship status in the Southern Baptist Convention in the early 1970s to state convention status in 1995.

second-largest city. He had gone to the airport to pick up a fellow missionary family, Mark and Barbara Stevens and their two children. Barbara Stevens and her 10-month-old son were among nearly 150 people injured in the attack.

Describing the Hydes as "very warm-hearted missionaries," Jones said their enthusiasm and commitment made Iowa Baptists certain that the duo were "very conscientious about their work" in the Philippines, where they had served since their 1978 appointment by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

In Cedar Rapids, Immanuel Church "is saddened beyond words," Jones said. "The Hydes were here just here a few months ago," arriving just before the death of his mother.

"We have been apprehensive for their safety for some time," Jones added. "They have been much in our prayers," especially during the year-long captivity of New Tribes Mission workers Martin and Gracia Burnham by Philippine rebels linked to Osama bin Laden's terror network. Martin Burnham was killed in a June 2002 shootout between the rebels and the Philippine military. Gracia Burnham escaped injury and is now living with her three children in Kansas.

Jimmy Barrentine, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Iowa, in a statement issued March 4, said, "This is a terrible loss to the people and churches of our state. But at times like this it is good to remember that a life entrusted to God is never lost, never wasted. Even beyond death, God preserves life and extends the reach of Christian witness from one generation to another."

"Our duty now is to pray for the people of the Philippines until each and every one has experienced the love of Jesus. It is also our duty to continue to love, pray for and forgive those who mistreat us and those who count us as their enemy. This tragedy will also serve to strengthen our resolve to faithfully pray for the Hyde family and for the missionaries who serve throughout the world."

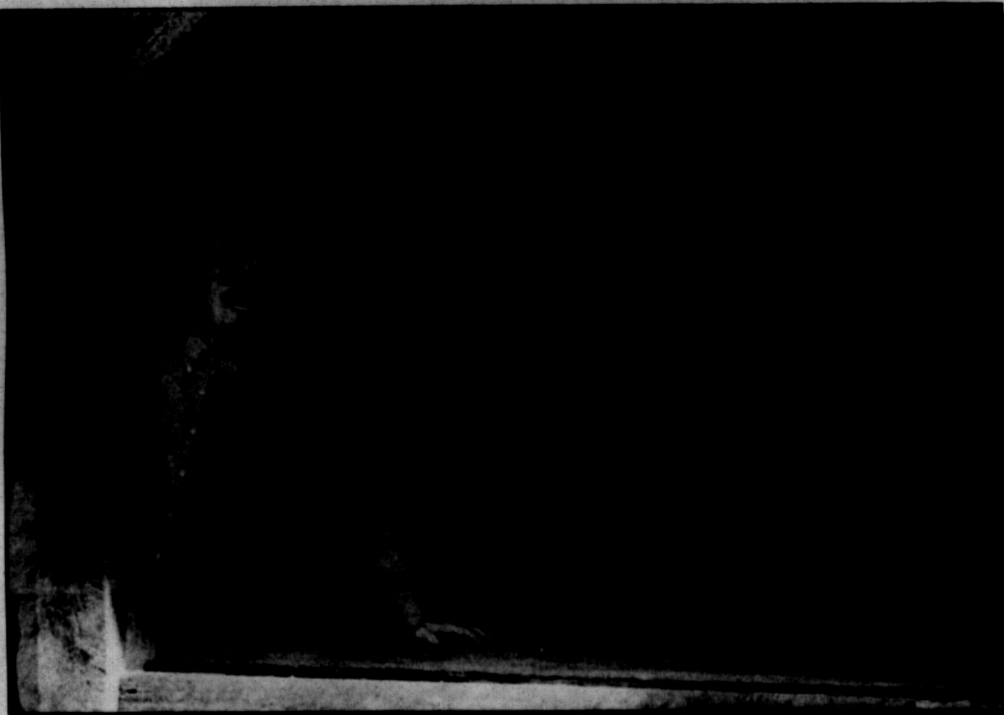
David Miller, president of the Baptist Convention of Iowa, also issued a statement: "We are shocked and saddened by the irony of a man as sweet, gentle and kind as Bill Hyde being killed in an act of such hatred. The Iowa Baptist churches that knew the Hydes loved them and appreciated their ministry on our behalf. The Hydes knew the danger they were in and yet continued their ministry because of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the people of the Philippines. We are saddened by Bill's death, but inspired by his commitment and sacrifice."

Ed Gregory, missions team leader for the Baptist Convention of Iowa, described Hyde as "the epitome of the missionary spirit." Amid periodic family needs and concerns, with some urging them to stay stateside by saying, "it's safer, it's better," Gregory said Hyde and his wife "just kept on going back to the field where God had call them." Gregory and Hyde first met during the early 1980s during Gregory's 17 years as Immanuel's pastor.

Over the years, Hyde "kept retraining ... fulfilling different roles ... teaching, church planting. He was constantly developing Filipino pastors, helping them get new work started and then mentoring them in their roles." His wife, meanwhile, likewise has been devoted to missions. "She was constantly preparing for and leading devotional life conferences for the women there," Gregory said.

Marion Livingston, a retired Cedar Rapids businessman and close friend of the Hydes, struck up a friendship with the family in the late 1970s after noticing their names posted on a bulletin board at Immanuel Church as missionaries in the Philippines — the destination of frequent business trips he was making at the time.

"I could see where the Lord had called Bill and Lyn to the Philippines," said Livingston, who visited the Hydes two or three times a year for a number of years. "They loved meeting the needs of the Filipinos."



FAMILY TIME — Bill and Lyn Hyde enjoyed a rare visit with their adult children during their 35th wedding anniversary celebration while on stateside assignment in 2001. Their son Steve (right) and his wife Noit (second from right) are Christian workers in Cambodia, while their son Timothy (left) lives in Dallas. (BP photo)

"They were kept real busy" during their furloughs in Iowa, said Jones, who led Iowa Baptists for 15 years and is now interim pastor of the Hydes' home church, Immanuel Church in Cedar Rapids. "Everywhere they ever spoke, people really did appreciate them. Iowa Baptists felt real proud to have them as foreign missionaries."

Hyde, a native of Cedar Rapids, was among 21 people killed when the bomb exploded in Davao City, the Philippines'

Seminary professor recalls Stevens, Hyde

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Mark Terry has never lost contact with Mark and Barbara Stevens during the couple's three years as missionaries to the Philippines.

Terry, professor of Christian missions and evangelism at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., taught the Stevenses during their years on campus in Louisville, Ky., and keeps abreast of the couple's work by way of their monthly newsletter.

Barbara Stevens and the couple's 10-month-old son Nathan and four-year-old daughter Sarah were injured along with nearly 150 others on March 4, when a bomb exploded at the airport in Davao City, Philippines. Bill Hyde, a Southern Baptist missionary in the Philippines since 1978, was among 21 killed in the explosion.

In 1998, Mark Stevens was the first to enroll in Southern's groundbreaking "2 Plus 2" missions program which combines two years of classroom work with two years of service as a missionary apprentice. Stevens became the program's first graduate in 2000. That same year, the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board (IMB) appointed the couple as career missionaries to the Philippines.

Terry receives the Stevens' newsletter about once a month. "They are outstanding young missionaries, very dedicated, very sharp young people who are truly committed to the cause of Jesus Christ and to the

Great Commission," the professor said. "If I was going to hold up an example good first-term missionaries, they would be splendid examples."

During the family's time in Davao City, Mark Stevens has coordinated efforts to reach Filipino tribal

groups with the gospel. The Stevenses were injured by a bomb placed outside the arrival terminal at an airport through which Terry had flown numerous times. Terry served as a missionary from 1976-89 in Davao City. He knows well the unrest in the southern Philippines.

"They were in the wrong place at the wrong time," Terry said. "The Muslim separatists have been conducting a campaign of terror in the southern Philippines for the last several years. This is just one in a long series of explosions and terrorist acts per-

petrated by Muslim separatists. They are trying to force the Philippine government to make the southern Philippines an autonomous or a semi-autonomous Muslim state.

"The missionaries know very well where they are serving is a volatile place. They understand that. The bomb wasn't targeted at them. It was simply a random act of terror and they just happened to be there when it detonated," Terry said

...

Terry also served on the mission field with Bill Hyde for more than a decade. Hyde and his wife Lynn came to the Philippines in 1978 to the capital city of Manila.

Hyde first worked as a music teacher at Faith Academy, a missionary boarding school. Later, he returned to Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and obtained another degree before returning to Manila to work with the IMB in leadership development.

Terry said his path crossed with Hyde's infrequently but remembers the late missionary for his personality.

"He [Hyde] was Mr. Personality," Terry said. "He had an ebullient personality. He was very outgoing, very friendly."

"I didn't see him very often. We were in Davao City and he was 500 miles north in Manila. Saw them once a year at the annual missionaries' meeting, but I remember what a nice man he was."



Mark and Barbara Stevens

Newsletter: missionary well aware of dangers

DAVAO CITY, Philippines (BP) — "Kidnappings, bombings, burning of villages, ambushes, killings, injuries, threats, evacuations and other forms of terrorist activity have become the norm for people living on our island of Mindanao," International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries Bill and Lyn Hyde wrote to family and friends in an August 2000 newsletter from their mission location in the Philippines.

Bill Hyde died March 4 when a bomb hidden in a backpack exploded at the international airport in Davao City, Philippines, where he was picking up another IMB missionary family, Mark and Barbara Stevens, on their return from a trip.

The Hydese had served as Southern Baptist missionaries in the Philippines since 1978 and were fully aware of the dangers inherent in such a country.

"It is a complicated situation that dominates the central and western parts of the island as well as the far east coast of the island," they continued in the August 2000 letter. "The reports primarily speak of two sides, the Muslims and the military (government). However, everyone living in the areas of conflict are drawn into the fighting, and all are suffering."

Bill and Lyn Hyde explained that the primary reason the hostilities have continued for decades in the region is because the Muslims desire for the island of Mindanao to be autonomous, functioning under Islamic control rather than a part of the Philippine nation.

"Although there have been a few small bombs and a lot of bomb threats in the city where we live, we feel quite safe," the Hydese's newsletter continued. "We pay attention to news reports and are cautious in our moving about. Traveling in the province is restricted at times, but the Lord's work continues in spite of the peace and order problems."

The Lord's work was the burning passion that kept the Hydese in harm's way. They reported that on their island of 18 million people, less than 10 percent are evangelical Christians. Bill Hyde worked as a church planter to train pastors and other church planters, and they reported that as a result of the training Bill had done in basic evangelism, discipleship and church planting, more than 300 churches were planted between 1998 and 2000.

The Hydese reported that Filipinos were eager to be taught in a December 1998 newsletter. "Unlike American seminars, when Filipinos have this kind of opportunity, the sessions continue almost non-stop for hours and even days," Bill Hyde wrote. "They take a short time for meals, but they often talk and share throughout the night with only a few hours of sleep. It is common for my trainers and I to take turns sleeping on a back bench when we are not teaching so that we can carry on for 20 straight hours."

Although travel, food and lodging conditions were challenging, Bill Hyde reported that he enjoyed his job assignment, taking leadership train-

ing to believers who would otherwise not have opportunity for spiritual growth and understanding God's purpose for their lives to redeem the lost world. "It's always an adventure being on mission with God!" he wrote.

In October 1999, Bill and Lyn Hyde noted that statistics indicate new churches are four times more effective in evangelism than existing churches, and they had seen that to be true in the Philippines. An example they gave was one of Bill Hyde's trips to the Maragusan Valley, about four hours from Davao City, where he took two of his trained church planters along to establish and train a new church planting team with Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Church concept.

"In early July, a church planting crusade was conducted, resulting in the salvation of many people who then began to meet regularly for Bible study," the Hydese wrote. "Since the [Purpose Driven church planting] began in June, the initial group of believers has become an established church with more than 80 attending weekly. They have constructed a cement block building with a cement floor and tin roof."

"They have established extension Bible studies in five separate villages with more than 100 tribal people being baptized since the first of June. It is fully anticipated that the five Bible studies will also

develop into churches, and the multiplication will continue."

In a December 1999 newsletter, the Hydese reported in that year they helped train more than 3,000 Filipinos in evangelism, discipleship and church planting. As a result of church planting crusades, they said, 120 churches were planted during the previous four months, and most of the new churches had an average attendance of 60 to 80 people.



Lyn Hyde was active in leading women's Bible studies and prayer groups, and in September 2000 she chaired a committee that brought Beth Moore to speak in Manila to missionary women of the IMB's Western Pacific region.



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

NEW CHRISTIANS — Filipinos listen to Southern Baptist missionary Bill Hyde as he addresses them before their baptism in this undated photo. (BP photo)

BAPTIST COLLEGE & SEMINARY NEWS

OBITUARY



Flowers

Maurice E. Flowers, Laurel, died Feb. 17 at the South Central Regional Medical Center with leukemia. He was buried Feb.

20 at Terry Cemetery.

Flowers pastored churches in Mississippi and Louisiana. His last place of service was in Jones County as director of missions.

He is survived by his wife, Mildred Flowers; two sons, Curtis Flowers, Huntsville, Ala., and Vic Flowers, Houston, Texas; and one daughter, Suzanne Chennault, Laurel.

Read **M. Diket, William Carey College**, has been selected by the National Art Education Association to receive the National Higher Education Division Award. The award will be presented at the NAEA national convention in Minneapolis, Minn., April 4-8.

You won't want to miss the **Mississippi College, Clinton, Opera Theater** presentation of *An Enchanted Evening: A Salute to Rodgers and Hammerstein* on March 20 at 7:30 p.m. in Swor Auditorium. Twenty-six students will perform beloved songs from *Oklahoma*, *The Sound of Music*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, and *The King and I*. Tickets are \$10 for faculty and \$5 for students.

Two **Mississippi College** seniors won awards at the Southeast Journalism Conference (SEJC), held in Pensacola, Fla., in February. Brian McCollister, Baton Rouge, La., received the second place award for Best Web Page Designer, and Grace Thornton, Clarksdale, won 5th place for College Journalist of the Year. The SEJC is an organization of more than 45 member colleges and universities in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The

competition is set up to recognize individual college students for



Thornton & McCollister

overall expertise in the journalism field.

Blue Mountain College will host the annual Ministerial Alumni Meeting on March 28. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Johnny Burns, President, Blue Mountain College Ministerial Alumni Association, will deliver the message during chapel, and Larry Robertson, pastor of Hilldale Church, Clarksville, Tenn., will speak during the 11:30 a.m. program. A tour of Johnnie Armstrong Gallery will be given at 1:15 p.m.

Three **William Carey College** students received awards recently at the Mississippi Federated Music Clubs state conference. Shanna Carey, Tuscaloosa, Ala., won first place in the State Federated Music Clubs Female Singer competition. Stephanie Crumbley, West Lafayette, Ind., won the state round of the National Federated Music Clubs, NFMC, in voice. Josh Tannehill, Hattiesburg, won the state round of NFMC in guitar.

The **William Carey College Omicron Sigma** chapter of Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity received seven awards at the Collegiate

Chapter Awards held recently. Delta Omicron is a professional fraternity in the field of music with collegiate chapters established throughout the United States and abroad. The WCC chapter received awards for Publicity, Scholarship, Chapter Efficiency, and Campus/Community Service. The chapter also received an honorable mention for Music. Omicron Sigma member Emily Jones, Trinity, Ala., received the Star of Delta Omicron.



Mississippi College Opera Theater

BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL OF SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

LECTURES

"We Have Seen His Glory"

APRIL 15-17, 2003

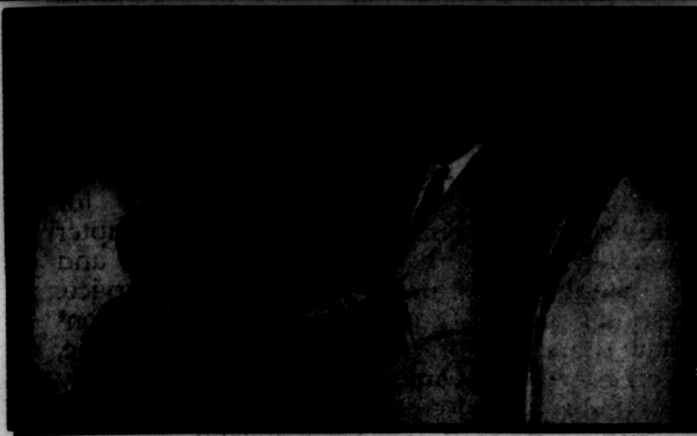
11 A.M. ANDREW GEROW HODGES CHAPEL
BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Featuring
RICHARD BAUCKHAM
Professor of New Testament Studies
and Bishop Wardlaw Professor in the
University of St. Andrews, Scotland

For more information, call (205) 726-2000
Or visit www.samford.edu

Beeson Divinity School is a member of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States. It is also a member of the Association of Christian Colleges and Universities. Beeson Divinity School is an equal opportunity institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or ethnicity in its admissions, employment, or educational programs.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



The Hipps Family and Georgia & Charles Williams

Tracey Hipps, pastor of Central Church, McComb, received his Masters of Christian Ministry from Charles Williams, president of the Southern Baptist School for Biblical Studies. Pictured (from left) are Hipps' son Colby, his wife Patricia, Hipps, Williams, and Williams' wife Georgia.

wife Georgia. on January 5. David Roberson is pastor.

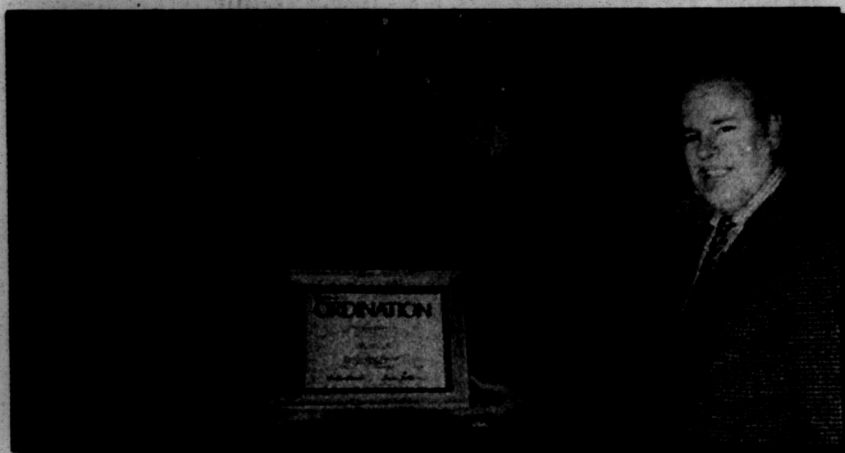
Tom Daniel has resigned as minister of youth at First Church, Starkville. He is available for youth and youth parent events, and pulpits. Daniel can be reached at (662) 324-2574.

Phil Fancher was ordained

Rob Faulk, pastor, Mary & Phil Fancher

Mary, and Fancher.

Gunter Road Church, Florence, ordained Johnny Allen as a deacon on Feb. 9. Pictured (from left) are Irving Forrester, Johnny Allen, and Gene Jordan, pastor.



Forrester, Allen, and Jordan, pastor

Maude Mills Pope, a member of First Church, Chicora, was honored on her 90th birthday with church services, a luncheon, and tea

on Feb. 23 as minister at South Louisville Church, Louisville. Fancher is pastor at Antioch Church, Sturgis. Pictured (from left) are Rob Faulk, pastor, Fancher's wife



Bill Turnage

Professor dies in N. Carolina

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — James H. Blackmore, an author, pastor and longtime professor at Southeastern Seminary, died March 3 at his home in Warsaw, N.C. He was 87. Blackmore taught at Southeastern Seminary from 1963-96, and during much of that time led the school's associate of divinity program.



Blackmore

He had degrees from Wake Forest University and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School; a doctoral degree from the University of Edinburgh; and post-doctoral studies at Duke University, the University of Iowa, and Princeton University.

For a few years in the 1960s, Blackmore also led the seminary's public relations and communications efforts. He produced a number of books during his lifetime, including works on the life of Christ, biblical studies, and several collections of sermons.

STAFF CHANGES

Arkadelphia Church, Bailey, has called Paul Bird as minister of music.



Bird

youth, Kristi Smith, Tony Smith, pastor, Beverly Bilbo, and Jimmy Bilbo, music.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS



Bethel Church Staff, Liberty

Are you paying too much for your Medicare Supplement or Prescription Drugs? If yes, Call Today!

• Disability Medicare Supplement

Under age 65.....New Low Rates! Drug Card!

• Medicare Supplement Age 65-99

New Low Rate Non-smoker plan Save up to 50% on your Medicare Supplement...Call and ask about our Low Non-Smoker Rates Today!

• New Prescription Plan For Seniors

Call today for free information!

Call today for free information:
E.F. Hutton Insurance Marketing

P.O. Box 5127, Brandon, MS 39047
or call toll-free:
1-800-880-2305

Agents needed:

For complete details on all plans including limitations and exclusions call today. Not connected with any Federal program.

Are your seniors tired of crawling over the HUMP? The solution is a 15-passenger van with an aisle, raised roof & electric step.

Call Tri-State Van & Bus Today! 1-800-330-3822
BUSES! VANS! PEOPLE MOVERS!
www.tri-statevanbus.com



Southeastern Bus Sales

Mississippi's In-State source for Buses and Vans

- Eldorado
- Starcraft
- Turtle Top
- Used Buses



1-800-423-9826

Business done the "Riteway" for over 16 years!
5483 I-55 South Jackson, MS 39272

JUST FOR THE RECORD

The RAs of Neshoba Church, Union, held a Bike-a-thon on Dec. 14 and raised \$591.90 for mission projects including Lottie Moon missions.

The 1st grade GA class at Broadmoor Church, Madison, recently held a Valentine Tea party. Each girl brought a stuffed animal that was donated to the Blair E. Batson Children's

Hospital.

Christian Magician, Felix Snipes, will be at First Church, Ridgeland, March 21-23, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., and Sunday at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. For more information, call (601) 856-6139.



GAs of Broadmoor Church, Madison

Biblical challenge at each service. Danny Guthrie, First Church, Belzoni, led worship.

prayed to receive Jesus. Mike DePhillips, pastor, Pleasant Hill Church, Quitman, was the crusade chairman.

\$10. Clay Crosse will be in concert April 11 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5. For more information on these events, call (662) 289-5575.

The Women's Ministry of First Church, Kosciusko, will hold a Ladies Night Out with Renee and Clay Crosse April 19 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are

The Men's Enrichment Ministry in conjunction with the Women's Enrichment Ministry and Children's Ministry of Slayden Church, Lamar, hosted a Father-Daughter Sweetheart Evening on Feb. 14. The event included dinner, music, and video clips of the girls. The fathers and special escorts signed commitments to pray over and mentor their daughters.

RAs of Neshoba Church, Union

A team of Mississippians from Good Hope Church, Madison County, and Mountain Creek Church, Florence, went on a mission trip to Haiti Feb. 21-March 1. The team did construction and maintenance projects, gave medical assistance, and held revival services at night.

Faith Church, Jackson, will sponsor the University of Southern Mississippi, Carillon Handbell Choir in concert March 30 at 4 p.m. at Wesley Biblical Seminary Sanctuary. All are welcome. A love offering will be taken.

Country Woods Church, Jackson, will hold Missions Now Weekend, Just a Wanna Be, March 28-30. The cost is \$22. Activities are Friday 6-9:30 p.m., Saturday 8:30 a.m.-9:15 p.m., and Sunday 9-11:45 a.m.

Humphreys Baptist Association sponsored a spiritual emphasis week at Humphreys Academy Feb. 24-28. Gary Permenter, Columbus, brought a

An Evangelistic Crusade for Christ was held in The Clarke Association, Quitman, Feb. 23-26. James E. Messer, Theodore, Ala., was the evangelist. Phil Willis, Baton Rouge, La., led music, and John Yates, Enterprise, Ala., was the children's evangelist. Special guests were The Bible Tones, Tom Lester, and Max Dempsey. At least 26 different people



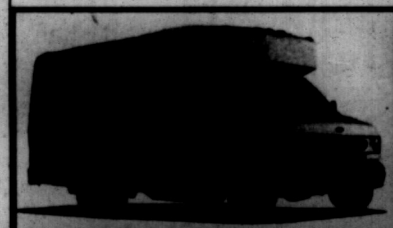
Missions Team from Good Hope & Mountain Creek Churches

SLAYDEN BAPTIST CHURCH, SLAYDEN, Miss. (Marshall Association) is seeking an interim Music/Worship leader. Please contact the church office at (662) 252-4559.
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, Hattiesburg, Miss. is currently seeking a bi-vocational minister of music. Please send resumes c/o music search, Calvary Baptist Church, 3139 Oak Grove Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.
THE LEE COUNTY BAPTIST Association is now accepting resumes for the Associational Missions Director (AMD). Please send resumes to: Lee County Baptist Association, c/o Administrative Committee,

Post Office Box 2640, Tupelo, MS 38803.
DANIEL MEMORIAL BAPTIST Church, Jackson, Miss., is seeking a committed Christian with musical skills to lead worship. The church seeks to honor God through Christ-exalting and heart-felt worship that combines the best of contemporary songs and classic hymns. For more information call Pastor Steve Potts at (601) 376-4100.
LIBERTY HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, Pope, Miss., is seeking a bi-vocational minister of music. Please send resume to Agnes Allen, music committee chairman, 454 Bolton Road, Pope, MS 38658.

15-Passenger Van Safety is Big News these Days!

LifeWay has the solution—a 15-passenger mini-bus that meets Federal safety standards.



1-800-370-6180
carpenterbus.com

LifeWay
CHURCH BUSES
Carpenter Bus Sales, Inc.
Nation's #1 Church Bus Dealer

CHURCH FURNISHINGS, FREE estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone (601) 776-6617.

ATTENTION MINISTERS and self-employed. Finally affordable health insurance; call (662) 568-3482.

HOPPER GLASS STUDIO, CUSTOM church windows, reworking and repair, Columbus/Jackson, (877) 477-1899.

PASTORS, TEACHERS, CHURCH STAFF. Quality Health Insurance. Call today for a free quote. Quentin E. Adams (601) 594-5676, quentinadams35@hotmail.com.

A BRAND NEW QUEEN Orthopedic mattress set. NEW in plastic w/warr., sell \$119. Call (601) 209-0872.

A QUEEN MATTRESS SET, pillow-top, NEW in plastic. Sell \$175. Call (601) 209-0872.

A BRAND NEW KING Orthopedic mattress set. NEW in plastic, only \$189. Call (601) 209-0872.

WEST SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH is taking bids on eighteen padded oak pews, along with two pulpit chairs and one communion table. Call (601) 989-2359 for information.

SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS: LOCAL AND long distance telephone service, calling cards, DSL, web hosting, satellite T.V., wireless phones, computers, www.totalcomplan.net, www.braxtonenterprises.net.

LONG DISTANCE - RESIDENTIAL, 4.9 cents a minute interstate, 5.9 cents inside Miss. Prepaid cards 4.5 cents. Toll free 4.9 cents. No fees or minimum, 6-sec billing. Lower rates for businesses with higher volume. Christian Co., 250,000 happy customers. Christian couple, retired after 47 years in SBC ministry. Income opportunity for agents & Christian ministries. FREE call (866) 749-0280.

BRANSON, MO CONDO - WALK-IN. Smoke free, no pets. Sleeps six, 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Special rates - dinner tickets for Anniversary, Birthday. Groups welcome, call (662) 746-4632.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND Outreach. Gilliam Springs Baptist Church, Arab, Alabama is seeking an experienced minister (at least 3-5 years) to lead the education and outreach ministries. Seminary

training preferred. Send resume to Staff search, Box 463, Arab, AL 35016 or mroden@gilliamspings.org.

HEIDELBERG STAINED GLASS, Meridian. Design, Fabrication, Repair. Fax illustrations to (601) 483-7958 or call (800) 368-2705.

NORRIS BOOKBINDING COMPANY, Inc., old bibles rebound. Also church bulletins and hymnals. For more information call (662) 453-7424 or fax us at (662) 455-6743. Located at 107 North Stone Avenue, Greenwood, MS 38930.

ROLAND VS 880 EX - DIGITAL STUDIO, Martin HD 28 guitar, bass, keyboards. Call (601) 824-4696.

PHOENIX CONVENTION: GRAND Canyon Motorcoach tours. Family/golf resort accommodations and hotel packages. Ideal location/shuttle. Discount airfares, Christian Travelers. Call (800) 972-8952, www.christiantravelers.com.

FIRST - DAVEVILLE BLENDED worship services, receiving resumes for a full-time Minister, music/youth. Reply to FBC Search Team, P.O. Box 308, Dadeville, AL 36853.

A HUMOROUS AND NOSTALGIC look back at a Preacher-Teacher and would-be comedian growing up in rural Mississippi. "My Brother Was An Only Child", written by Arlis Nichols. It's 214 pages of pure pleasure. Send \$15 to Arlis Nichols, 1142 C R 375, Enterprise, MS 39330. For Banquet information call (601) 659-9991 or email Arlisweb@aol.com.

MUSIC DIRECTOR. SBC SEEKS FT MUSIC director. Exceptional professional opportunity for creative, experienced, and skilled church musician. Music degree preferred. Send resumes to: Secretary, Minister of Music Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 508, McMinnville, TN 37110.

FULL-TIME MUSIC/YOUTH MINISTER needed. Send resume with references to: Calvary Baptist Church, Music Search Committee, P.O. Box 543, Butler, AL 36904.

Call for free BROCHURE
BAPTISTRIES
HEATERS, PUMPS
FACTORY DIRECT
TOLL FREE 1-800-251-0679
www.fiberglasschurchprod.com
FIBERGLASS BAPTISTRY CO.
3511 HIXSON PIKE • CHATTANOOGA, TN 37415

RESIGNING IMB

Editor:

We are writing to inform you of our decision to resign as International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries and to thank Mississippi Baptists for your loving support since 1986. The Baptist university in Japan where David is currently assigned hired him as of March 1. We will remain in Fukuoka serving as we feel called by God.

There are several reasons for this decision including changes in IMB missions philosophy, but the main reason is the requirement to sign the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (BFM). We described our disagreements to the IMB and were informed that our beliefs would not result in our termination, but that we must sign the statement that we would carry out our ministry in accordance with the BFM. For us, this is something that we cannot sign with integrity. Our refusal is not because we do not believe the Bible. Rather, it is because we do and want to live according to its principles that we cannot sign.

This letter is by NO means an attempt to undermine your support for IMB missionaries. In fact, we would strongly encourage you to increase your financial and prayer support for them.

Thank you for your loving support over the past 16 years. Columbus is home to Robin and she has also lived in Laurel, Ellisville, and Bay Springs. Please keep us in your prayers.

David & Robin Parks Johnson
Fukuoka, Japan

RESIGNATION SAD

Editor:

I have received a letter from Hershel Johnson telling me that David and Robin Johnson, who serve in Fukuoka, Japan, with Herschel, had written to Tom Williams of the Western Pacific area of the International Mission Board (IMB) to say that they will resign as of March 1 because they will not sign the required statement.

David is a professor, along with Hershel, at Seinan Gakuin University in Fukuoka. He will remain at the university and continue his present ministries, but as a paid professor by the university instead of being an IMB missionary. How sad!

I met David in 1989 when I first went on a mission trip to Japan. In 2000, I went back to Fukuoka. One day, three of us were on the Seinan campus passing out tracts. David Johnson saw us and he came up to us to find out what we were passing out and who we represented. He did not remember me from 1989. He said there have been cult members on the campus and he tried to prevent them from passing out literature.

This man and his wife have been serving the cause of Christ as our missionaries, but now this will come to an end.

In fact, when Hershel is forced to resign, Southern Baptists will not have a missionary in Fukuoka. Hershel, like David, will stay in Fukuoka and continue his work with one full-time church, and two mission stations.

Bruce Hill
Lexington

CLEAR THE TEMPLE

Editor:

In your editorial of February 13, in the next-to-the-last and last paragraphs, you state, "...regardless of our strongly-held opinions..." and "...may we give our best to the Savior who gave all for us." I agree we should put our "opinions" and "grievances" aside and put first the task of evangelizing lost souls, but Jesus stopped long enough to clear the money changers out of the temple. He also chastised the Pharisees and Sadducees for their wrong ideas concerning the law (God's Word!).

If our missionaries are not comfortable with pledging our beliefs as Southern Baptists (who believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God), then they have no business being supported by our Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) dollars that come from all Bible-believing churches and their members. That is the same as cheating the churches who believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God.

It is high time we stand against liberalism and stop playing footsie with false teachers and false prophets. All through Paul's letters, he warns us about these false teachers and false prophets. This is exactly how the homosexuals get their agenda noticed, as well as advocates concerning abortion. We find now that the *Roe v. Wade* decision was based on a lie. Jesus tells us that the devil is the father of all lies and it seems old Lucifer is working overtime wherever he can.

I praise God that SBC and International Mission Board leaders are working to keep Satan from destroying God's work.

Frances Parrish
Starkville

PARDON ME

Editor:

Pardon my misunderstanding, but I've always heard that our International Mission Board (IMB) was a "sending agency" for Southern Baptists, and an organized way of supporting those called-out ones who declared their commitment to be servants of our Lord wherever needed. I may be all wrong but my Bible tells me that God does not always call the qualified, but He always qualifies his called.

I have it on good authority that that all missionaries appointed by IMB have already signed the statement certifying

their commitment to the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM) even before the two-to-three-year process of qualifying for missionaries begins. How many times do they have to sign that thing?

Could the Apostle Paul qualify as an IMB missionary with our strict, legalistic requirements? Are the IMB bureaucrats now the Pope and Cardinals of the Southern Baptist Convention? Who determines the objectives of God in the various people groups of the world — the called-out ones who work with these groups eyeball-to-eyeball, or the bureaucrats in the IMB ivory tower?

I'm really confused. I guess I'm out of touch with modern-day Baptists. If I'm that far off the mark, please forgive me! Seems to me some people want to serve God, but only as advisors. If God is their co-pilot, somebody better swap seats.

The Bible was written over 2,000 years ago by inspired men of God. You can follow the BFM if you want, but I'll follow what's written in the Word of God.

Bill Clark
Ackerman

SEEKING PREACHERS

Editor:

I am truly honored that you as Mississippi Baptists have given me the opportunity to serve as your Pastor's Conference president. I will put together and preside over the conference in 2004. As you know, to get some of the preachers we love to hear they must be contacted months if not years in advance. For this cause I want you to know that I am praying to Jesus for guidance and already contacting preachers who will be a blessing to us. One problem I have is that while having hundreds of pastor friends in Mississippi, I do not get the privilege of hearing many Mississippi pastors preach. I am asking you that if you know of a Mississippi pastor that you would like to hear at the 2004 Pastor's Conference, please contact the church office of 38th Avenue Church. The telephone number is (601) 264-3897. My e-mail address is revdean@bellsouth.net. My mailing address is 419 N 38th Ave. Hattiesburg, Ms. 39401. God Bless you.

Dean Stewart, pastor
38th Avenue Church
Hattiesburg.

WAR AND PEACE

Editor:

The recent guest opinion by Douglas Baker raised the question: "Jesus, the pacifist?" Baker states, "God has delegated the power of the sword to the state as his authorized agent against the evil powers of the age," in contrast to Jesus who said, "overcome evil by doing good."

My problem with Baker's assumed delegation is that it was the state that saw no evil in slavery with the compliance of Southern Baptist churches. It was the state that freed those who boldly claimed credit for the deaths of blacks during the civil rights era, while Baptist leaders remained silent. The state is "us": people who cannot make moral determinations apart from understanding what Jesus meant by "thy kingdom come on earth as it is and will be in heaven."

I am grateful that I had Clayton Waddell as my Christian Ethics professor at missions-minded New Orleans Seminary. Waddell helped me learn that "agape" was not a big gap between two opposing forces, but a love that was powerful enough to bring peace such as the world had never known. He reminded me that Jesus calls us to be change agents for peace, and to give up our fascination with guns and swords as a means to peace. The prophets of old cried "peace, peace" when there was no peace.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." To which voice are Southern Baptists listening?

Caby Byrne
Memphis

WONDERFUL GOD

Editor:

I am a member of the First Church, Gunnison. My church is headed by Leo Timms, a long-time pastor and man of God. Our church has been around for quite some time, and has been through a lot of changes. I wanted to share with others some of our church experiences, and at the same time to give them the hope that they need to continue doing the work of God regardless of how many, or how few, they may be in sharing the Word.

Every Sunday morning the members of our church gather to share stories of the week, to come together to worship, and to come together as one. I am the youngest member. I am in the presence of others who are older, wiser, and more experienced than myself, and we need not forget the presence of God.

When I think of the size of our church I am drawn to Matt. 18:20. Isn't this great news for any church. Each Sunday God watches and guides our service. He gives us the will, the desire, the strength, and the hope to go on regardless of how many pews are empty. What a wonderful God we have!

Take this message to heart as you attend church, or even if you are just talking about God with a friend. Even though the company may be small, the faith and hope is just as large as a coliseum full of listeners.

Chris Pearson
Gunnison

(continued on page 10)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Conferences on Islam set for centers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Some 15% of Americans profess a belief other than Christianity, including 1.5% who are Muslims, according to a January 2002 Barna poll and the 2003 Encyclopedia Britannica. Those changing — and challenging — demographics have prompted LifeWay Christian Resources and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to offer two conferences on Islam for pastors, church leaders, and interested laypeople, on Aug. 15-17 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina and Sept. 19-21 at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center in New Mexico.

By presenting the two conferences on Islam, LifeWay and NAMB seek to ease that confusion by educating and informing pastors and church members about Islam, its practices, theology, and beliefs. Sessions will include keynote addresses by Carl Ells, president of the Muslim Joseph, at Ridgecrest and Samy Tanagho, a former Muslim, at Glorieta.

The Ridgecrest conference on Islam will include a special format designed to allow as many staff and lay leaders possible to participate. Church staff members are encouraged to attend the Friday and Saturday sessions, which will then be repeated on Saturday evening and Sunday morning, allowing more laypeople to take part.

The registration fee is \$61. Meal plans, room rates, and package prices are available. Ridgecrest is located 17 miles east of Asheville on Interstate 40, and Glorieta is located 18 miles northeast of Santa Fe. For more information, call Ron Pratt at (615) 251-2065 or visit www.lifeway.com and click on the conference center tab.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (CONTINUED)

JUST THE FACTS

Editor:

P.M. South, in his letter in the February 13 issue, states "How about exposing the blatant liberalism that infests the (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship)? This is well-documented." I would appreciate your publishing these "documented" facts. Also, I would ask of South if he has talked with Daniel Vestal, head of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, to substantiate his facts.

Bill Ballou
Abilene, Texas

NOT HATEFUL

Editor:

The news media, secularists, and liberal Christians do not understand Biblical Christianity. Biblical Christianity is about proclaiming the truth. It is not hate that causes us as Christians to speak out against those who disagree with Scripture.

An example of this misunderstanding was seen in a recent NBC newscast that attacked Jerry Vines, pastor of First Church, Jacksonville, Fla., and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. They accuse Vines of being unloving because he spoke against Mohammed. The Feb. 25 NBC Nightly News broad-

cast portrayed Vines as "preaching hate" against Muslims. The truth or error of his remarks were never considered. The actual remarks were never examined. He did not talk against Muslims. He only compared Jesus the Christian Savior with Mohammed the Islamic founder. In his statement he quoted Islamic holy writings that said Mohammed married a six-year-old girl and had sex with her when she was nine years old.

Everything Vines said is verifiable. All of it is fact, not opinion. If Vines was hateful in just mentioning the truth about Mohammed's family life, then anyone who states the truth about someone else is hateful. Under that definition, NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw is hateful. All the people who were interviewed and who disagreed with Vines were hateful and preachers of hate and division in what they stated.

Willard "Willy" K. Crawley, Sr.
Walls

LOWREY RISING

Editor:

Following the Civil War, several Baptist families who had been involved in the Mississippi Baptist Association of 1806 moved to Blue Mountain to begin a new church. General Mark Perrin Lowrey was one of the leaders in the new community. After he established Blue Mountain Female College in 1873, the population of the community began to increase. The building of the original church, named Macedonia, became inadequate. In 1879, the congregation built a new frame building near the college on a plot that was donated by General Lowrey. On November 23, 1879, the building was dedicated and its name changed to Lowrey Memorial Church.

Now the needs of the hal-
lowed structure have become

many. As in older buildings, upkeep and maintenance have been constant. With escalating costs, repairs and improvements have been few. In recent months, the membership has been aroused in a new challenge of meeting the spiritual needs of the college and town. Such concern has also caused renewed attention to the appearance and condition of the buildings.

Brick and mortar repair on the exterior is currently underway. Interior refurbishing of the sanctuary includes a new baptistry, additional lighting, painting, and carpet.

Because of the rippling effect Lowrey Memorial Church has had across the area for more than a century, we are bold to press on to achieve this task for God's glory. Further information on this project can be obtained by contacting the church at P.O. Box 216, Blue Mountain, MS 38610. E-mail: lmhc@dixie-net.com.

Tom Sumrall, pastor
Lowrey Memorial Church
Blue Mountain

HARVESTERS

Editor:

God has called some men to the ministry of vocational evangelism. These men have a vital ministry in the Lord's church and can be a catalyst for bringing people to Jesus. We are blessed in Mississippi with a fine group of vocational evangelists who serve our Lord in both preaching and worship ministries. During the 22 years that I have been a pastor, it has been my privilege to use many of these people. They have come into our churches at strategic times and have enhanced my ministry by drawing the net and adding the final touch to the Holy Spirit's work of calling sinners to repentance.

During the last five years we have experienced phenomenal growth at Parkway Church in Houston. Though

in a small north Mississippi town, we have seen hundreds of people come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. Our vocational evangelists have been great helpers in this endeavor. In a recent meeting, Mississippi evangelist Danny Lanier preached (and sang) the Gospel with both simplicity and substance. The result was that 25 people were saved. Danny is one of our state's premier evangelists. I heartily recommend him and our other Mississippi evangelists to your church.

Size or location does not matter. They are harvesters and will go wherever the Lord opens doors. Use them to assist your church in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Gregg Thomas, pastor
Parkway Church
Houston

CONFUSED THINKING

Editor:

As time goes by, there are more and more protests concerning the use of capital punishment. In a recent letter to The Clarion-Ledger newspaper, a writer protested the state's latest execution of a criminal convicted of a particularly heinous crime. A young woman had been brutally beaten and raped, then mutilated with a knife while still alive. She was left alone to die in the woods.

In the same letter, the writer let it be known that he was in favor of abortion. Isn't someone guilty of confused thinking? It's all right to kill and innocent little baby who is guilty of nothing, but this hard-core murderer must be allowed to live? In this society you find people claiming to be born-again Christians, yet they say that abortion is quite moral and legal. Has the Day of Accountability been done away with? Maybe it disappeared some years ago, when they said God died.

Lamar Wray
Kilmichael

REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Good Hope, Batesville: March 13-16; youth lock-in; Thur., 6:30 p.m.; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Blake Newsom, Delta State, preaching; Clint Newsom, Tupelo, music; Gerald H. Walker, pastor.

Trace Ridge, Ridgeland: March 23; 25th anniversary; worship, 10 a.m.; lunch will be served; for more information, call (601) 856-2529; all former staff and members are cordially invited.

Escatawpa, Escatawpa: March 16-19; Sunday, 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Billy Williams, evangelist; Ronnie Cottingham, music; Greg Johnston, pastor.

First, Belzoni: March 23-26; Jerry Sullivan, Magee, preaching; R.L. and Beth Sigrest, music; all

former members are invited.

Gum Grove, Brookhaven: March 16-19; Johnny Sykes, evangelist; Mark Brown, music; Jimmy Smith, pastor.

Friendship, McComb: March 23; 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Ricky Kennedy, East McComb, McComb, evangelist; Philip Alford, North McComb, McComb, music; LaVerne Summerlin, pastor.

Cato, Mendenhall: July 27; 150th anniversary; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch will follow; historical program, 1 p.m.; a day of remembrance will be held Dec. 14.

West Laurel, Laurel: Oct. 3-5; centennial celebration; former members and friends should send their current address to 1400

West Fifth St., Laurel, MS 39440; Cary F. Worthington, pastor.

Military, Sumrall: March 16-17; Sunday, 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m.; Mon., 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Danny Shows, music; Mike Aultman, pastor.

Wheeler Grove, Corinth: March 30-April 2; Sunday 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Harvey Reeves, evangelist; Kara Blackard, pastor.

Duck Hill, Duck Hill: March 30; sesquicentennial celebration, 11 a.m.; lunch will follow; Johnny Hutchison, speaker; Travis Gray, pastor.

Richmond, Tupelo: April 6-9;

services nightly, 7 p.m.; Tom Sumrall, Lowrey Church, Blue Mountain; Ken Hester, First Church, Pontotoc; Tommy Atwood, First Church, Oxford; and Marc Howard, First Church, Verona, speakers; Clay Layfield, First Church, Chatsworth, Ga., music. For more information, call (662) 690-9132.

Fernwood Church, Gulfport: March 20-23; Thu.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m.; Kevin Meador, Prayer Closet Ministries, Decatur, speaker; Ray Duplessie, music; Jim Kultau, pastor. For more information, call (228) 896-4556.

Handsboro, Gulfport: March 23-26; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Argile Smith, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, evangelist; Louis White, music; Michael Olewski, pastor.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Praying That Focuses on God

I Chronicles 4:9-10; Daniel 9:1-19

By Lori Clendinning

"Mom-m-my-eeeeee! Dad-dy-eeeeee!"

A child's scream in the middle of the night after a bad dream or a fall from his bed is a specific, heart-stopping sound that sends concerned parents running to their child's bedside. What makes a little one cry out for his mom or dad? Why not for his teacher or neighbor or even a sibling? He knows first-hand that mom or dad will come running to help.

Good parents will assess the situation and provide the appropriate help and comfort, such as gentle, reassuring words and hugs. Similarly, and yet beyond comparison, God hears the cries of His hurting children and always responds. It may not be the answer we expected or wanted, but it is always for our best. Gentle,

reassuring instructions can be found within His word, calming anxious hearts and minds.

Why do we cry out to God? Why is His name readily upon our lips when we encounter troubling times, rather than the name of the President or military leaders? Despite evidence of great earthly power exhibited by men, believers know that God's power and presence is real and sustaining, the ultimate source of comfort and strength. In a secular worldview, many people do not pray because of their mistaken views of God. They may struggle with believing that God is interested in or attentive to their individual circumstances. Others view God as powerless to act in their circumstances or in the world.

The biblical worldview affirms that believers can approach God in prayer not



Clendinning

because of our goodness, but because of His character, as we will see in this week's Scripture passages.

First, Daniel recognized that God's power and presence are part of His character. Even as he approached God's throne, Daniel chose to call God by names that reflected

His character. According to Bible interpreters, Daniel addressed God as "Lord God" (Adonai lohim) and "LORD God" (Yahweh lohim), showing a balance between the great and dreadful God (v. 4) and the God of mercies and forgiveness (v. 9). Daniel knew God as holy and pure, thus he prayed with humility, confessing the sins of God's people.

Daniel displayed humble submission before asking for anything on behalf of God's people. His intercession on Israel's behalf was passionate and pointed: He first confessed that God's people were an embarrassment, a reproach to watchful unbelievers. He asked for forgiveness and relief from God's wrath for the

sake of causing any more damage to His own name. Likewise, Jabez, in I Chronicles 4:9-10, asked that he not be pained, that he would not cause pain. The sensitivity of these two men to sparing God's great and holy name to any further shame is inspirational.

How often do we act on our own selfish desires without ever considering the impact it has on God's reputation in our communities? Know this: God will not be ridiculed. We appear foolish to the unbelieving world and test God's patience when we forget Him or treat Him flippantly. He is not a hired servant, waiting to do our bidding. He is the great God of the universe and "all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He." Deuteronomy 32: 4. (NAS)

Dare we approach His throne with any other attitude than that of great humility, recognizing His awesome and mighty power? Like Daniel and Jabez, we should focus our prayers on God, praising Him for who He is: great, righteous, and merciful.

God is Great — God's power is greater than any other on earth. His awesome power is displayed before all who recognize Him as Almighty God.

God is Righteous — Because God is a righteous God, His people need to acknowledge their sin both individually and corporately. Our pure and holy God will not be mocked; sin is repugnant to Him and believers must repent through sincere prayer.

God is Merciful — God hears and answers prayer, not because we are righteous, but because He is merciful. His mercy comes from His great and wonderful love as demonstrated by the sacrifice of His son, Jesus. Answers to our prayers never come from our efforts, but by His.

Praise to our great and dreadful God, the God of mercies and forgiveness; and, as believers in Jesus Christ, praise to the One who adopted us as sons and daughters. Praise to our "Abba," our wonderful and comforting Daddy who always hears our cries.

Clendinning is member of First Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Honor the Lord

I Kings 5:2-7; 6:11-14; 7:51

By Harold Simmons

In Izmir, Turkey (ancient Smyrna), there is a Christian community that supports a church in the city. In fact, the church is also used by the NATO forces as a place to worship. The building is not a large structure with a rather nondescript exterior, but the interior is beautiful. Over the entryway there are paintings of former pastors. One of the pastors was Polycarp who was martyred for his steadfast refusal to say the Caesar is lord. There are large paintings of the four evangelists (gospel writers) that use animals and birds to symbolize the writers. The outside does not have much to identify it as a church because of the laws of the country. There are three letters painted on the outside -D.O.M. I asked

about the letters and was told that the initials were for Deus Optimus Maximus-(to the glory of) God, The Greatest, The Highest. What greater symbol could have been put on the building?

In our lesson this week, we read of Solomon building the Temple for that very reason-to give honor to the Lord.

Determined to Build the Temple (I Kings 5:2-7). The actions of Solomon can be called nothing less than determined. He had a drive to accomplish the task. Solomon wanted to do something that would bring honor to the Lord.

There was a pastor in West Tennessee who had been the pastor of a medium size church for 30 years. In those years he had been advised by some of the members on how



Simmons

to invest money. Upon his death, his wife was well cared for financially, and he had also stated in his will that a very large sum of money was to be given to Union University, a Tennessee Baptist school. One of the new dormitories was named for him in his honor. In verse 3 are the words "for the Name of the Lord his God" and in verse 5 are "for my Name." The temple was to honor the name of the Lord.

What was the driving force (motivation) that caused Solomon to be so determined to build the temple? It was the same force that caused the pastor to give the gift to Union University-devotion. Out of Solomon's love for God came the drive to do something abstract and tangible that would honor God before men, and this act had the desired effect. Look at the comment of Hiram in verse 7, "Praise be to the Lord." This action of Solomon was the catalyst for praise to God from others. It is easy to sing "O,

how I love Jesus" but it is better to "Let others see Jesus in you." Our acts of devotion—love motivated, love demonstrated—bring honor to the God whom we love.

Understand How to Honor the Lord (I Kings 6:11-13). God spoke to Solomon about the temple, but he spoke more about obedience. God wanted Solomon, and us, to know that buildings and rituals in no way substitute for obedience. Once again, God reminds Solomon of the covenant that he had with David concerning the blessing of a continued dynasty. The key to that covenant was obedience to the Lord's directions. The blessing would be twofold to the people of Israel. First, there would be the continuity in the transfer of power from one king to another without great disruption. Second, God would not abandon his people. They would have his continued abiding presence. Once again, these blessings come from learning and obeying God's commands.

Act to Honor the Lord (I Kings 6:14; 7:51). One of the ways that Solomon's actions

honored the Lord was that he carried through with the plans for the temple until everything was complete. He did not just build the building and furnish it, but he also gave the resources for it to function. He put into the treasury all the gold and silver that David had dedicated (set aside for the specific purpose).

Near our kitchen window we have several bird feeders. I watched as a chickadee worked feverishly at the woodpecker block to dislodge some of the seeds and nuts which are stuck together by hardened corn syrup. The little bird stayed with the task even though he had to overcome the obstacle of having to work through small openings of the wire basket that held the block of food. When we keep on working, even through hardships, to honor the Lord, we honor him. Acts of devotion such as spending a day in prayer, giving to a special offering or participating on a mission trip give honor to God.

Simmons is the pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

THE BAPTIST

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist, P.O. Box 530, Brandon, MS 39040-0530. FAX: (601) 292-1334. E-mail: baptist@comcast.net

Destruction of biblical sites draws criticism

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A sacred Jewish burial site traditionally regarded as the tomb of the biblical patriarch Joseph has been destroyed by Palestinian vandals, an action one Southern Baptist seminary

Eric Cantor, R-Va., to bar all aid to the Palestinian Authority if it persists in the destruction of Jewish artifacts.

"Connected with such destruction is extreme religious intolerance — contrary to the Jeffersonian principles of the free exercise of religion held dear by all Americans,"

Cantor said in introducing his bill designed specifically to protect the Temple Mount. "Thousands of years of Judeo-Christian heritage is under siege."

The destruction of the site traditionally regarded as Joseph's tomb was first discovered in late February. Entry to the tomb has been forbidden since October 2002 due to Palestinian control of

"We are talking about the tomb of one of the fathers of our nation," Natan Sharansky,

Israel's construction and housing minister, told The Post. "I do not know who should be criticized more here, those who destroyed it, or ourselves for ignoring it."

Calling for the Israeli government to publicize details of the destruction, Sharansky added, "Imagine for a

second that if, God forbid, one of the graves of a Moslem holy man were to be damaged, the Muslims would be on the barricades and the United Nations would pass one resolution after another, and they would be correct in doing so."

Andrews, who directs Midwestern Seminary's Morton-Seats Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, sees validity in Sharansky's assessment, calling for increased protection of all Middle Eastern sites of religious significance.

"I think that this needs to be an issue in the whole peace plan -- that traditional sites would be revered and respected so that we're not going to see New Testament Jericho desecrated or we're not going to see anyone try and storm the Temple Mount to remove the Islamic people from it. It works both ways," he said.

Andrews explained that Joseph's tomb is what archaeologists refer to as a "traditional site" — a site suspected to be associated with a particular biblical event but a site that nonetheless lacks concrete evi-

dence to connect it with that event. Other examples of traditional sites include David's tomb on Mt. Zion, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where Jesus is said to have been buried, and an upper room in Jerusalem where Jesus is said to have observed the Passover with his disciples.

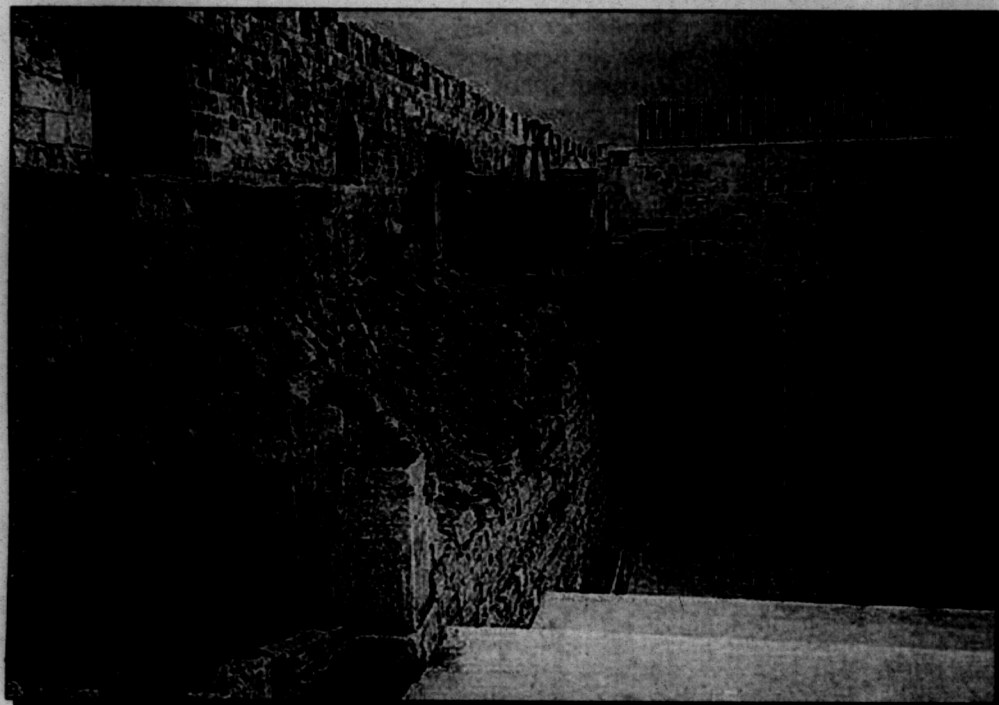
"Joseph was embalmed in Egypt, and the promise was to carry his bones out of Egypt and bury them in Canaan," Andrews said. "They buried the embalmed body somewhere in Shechem area (modern-day Nablus). We don't have the evidence to say this is exactly the place where he was buried. It's just revered by tradition."

Nevertheless, Andrews emphasizes the archaeological value of the site and its sacred meaning for Jews. "Because it's a traditional site doesn't lessen the fact that it's revered and held to be special by Jews."

"There may be antiquity there, and as such it needs to be studied," he said.

In an effort to promote the study of such antiquity, Cantor offered The Temple Mount Preservation Act, H.R. 2566, in the 107th Congress, a bill that would have withheld U.S. financial aid to the Palestinians until all unauthorized excavations of the Temple Mount are stopped.

Cantor, who serves as chief deputy majority whip in the House of Representatives, noted that in 2000 Congress appropriated \$400 million for the Palestinians over a period of three years. Additionally, the United States provides Palestinians with about \$75 million in indirect aid each year.



PALESTINIAN CONSTRUCTION — The Palestinian Authority continues to unilaterally change the face of the territory it controls, despite protests from Christian groups and archaeological experts that priceless artifacts are being destroyed. An example is the arches and rubble in the southeast corner of the Temple Mount. In the early 1990s the arch entrances were closed, but the Palestinians have recreated historically-incorrect entrances to two of the arches and started on a third arch, all without consulting interested parties. (Photo courtesy of Committee for the Prevention of Destruction of Antiquities on the Temple Mount)

professor regards as a tragic loss for students of biblical archaeology.

"It's a travesty to all humankind when traditional or archaeological sites are destroyed — sites that are revered and respected regardless of who does it in the name of science or war or anger," said Steve Andrews, professor of Old Testament and archaeology at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

This destruction comes in the wake of legislation offered in the 107th Congress by Rep.

Nablus, the city where it is located. A Jewish group known as Bratslav Hassidim continues to enter the site illegally, however, and was the first group of Israelis to discover the destruction, according to The Jerusalem Post.

"The grave was pounded with hammers. The tree at the entrance is broken," Bratslav leader Aaron Klieger said in the Feb. 21 edition of The Post. Car parts and trash littered the tomb, which has a "huge hole in its dome," he added.

The incident has left Israeli government officials indignant.

Baptist World Alliance sets 'survival' campaign

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Calling it a matter of "the survival of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA)," the BWA is launching a Make Up the Difference fund-raising campaign to offset the anticipated annual loss of \$125,000 from the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

In a March 3 letter to BWA supporters around the world, Alan Stanford, BWA's regional secretary for North America, said the campaign "is not an ordinary fund-raising appeal."

Stanford said the international Baptist organization "is facing a crisis as a result of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention, along with the challenge we face with today's economic downturn."

"Because of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's pending application for membership in the Baptist World Alliance, the Southern Baptist Convention's leadership has determined that they will reduce their current \$425,000 annual contribution by 30 percent," he wrote. "This is very unfortunate because the BWA wants to work with all Baptists."

In February, the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee approved a plan to reduce SBC funding of BWA from \$425,000 to \$300,000 and use the savings to create an international organization that critics say will compete with BWA.

The SBC's conservative leaders disapprove of BWA's plan to admit the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) as a member body. The CBF is a group of moderate Baptist churches and individuals opposed to the conservative takeover of the SBC. The CBF now funds its own ministries, seminaries, retirement plan and other ministries.

The CBF's Coordinating Council declared the organization officially separate from the SBC late last year, although CBF does not consider itself a "denomination" or "convention" because of objections to that terminology.

Because most churches that support CBF traditionally have been Southern Baptist churches, SBC leaders regard CBF as a "splinter" group that siphons off funds that rightfully belong to Southern Baptists.

Action on the CBF membership application is expected to take place in July during the BWA's General Council meeting in Seoul, Korea.

Citing a current operating deficit of more than \$600,000 as well as the proposed SBC cut, Stanford told the Western Recorder of Kentucky: "It is a very critical situation. We're talking about the survival of the Baptist World Alliance."

"We don't want to do anything to inflame the situation [with SBC leaders]," he added. "At the same time, we feel like it would be irresponsible to not ask people to make up the difference."

The BWA Executive Committee, meeting March 3-5 in Washington, also approved a 20% cut in this year's budget, reducing planned expenditures from \$2.11 million to \$1.69 million. The annual budget funds BWA's work among 206 Baptist conventions and unions around the world.

The proposal to reduce the SBC's financial support of BWA came during last month's SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville. The recommenda-

tion, which will be presented for action by SBC messengers in June, calls for the SBC to reallocate \$125,000 from BWA support to initiate an international network of "like-minded Christian bodies."

Emphasizing that the BWA "is the original and only recognized Baptist world fellowship," Stanford's letter noted, "Many of the Baptist conventions and unions it represents are persecuted minorities in their homelands who depend on the strength of the united Baptist world family to be their voice for religious freedom and human rights."

In addition to seeking one-time financial gifts from individuals and churches, the campaign includes a focus on enlisting "BWA Global Impact Churches" to provide ongoing financial support.

Stanford, who also serves as BWA's director for global impact, said BWA leaders have "formulated a strategy of beginning a network of mission-minded churches around the globe to be directly involved in the ministry and support of the BWA."

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
copyright 2003

SEB PXCEAFAB CXUTT

KE NXA POTT ES REK,

NXA CUDA OC DM

ZBENXAB, UKG DM

COCNAB, UKG DENXAB.

DUBW NXBAA:

NXOBNM-SOFA

Clue: O=H

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark 1:15